NZQA
New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Mana Tohu Matauranga O Aotearoa

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Assessment Report

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Part A: Commentary

Many candidates dealt with texts to which they were able to respond well. As a consequence, many discussions indicated enjoyment, identification, critique and an awareness of complexity. Most candidates displayed in-depth knowledge of their text(s). Only in a few cases did the choice of text leave candidates short of worthwhile points to discuss.

In some cases, candidates who seemed to be capable of worthwhile and mature responses took an approach that involved the presentation of a pre-learned essay. Such an approach often led to poor rewards because some material offered failed to address the statement chosen on the day. At times, key words in statements such as 'combination', 'transform', 'influence' and challenge' were ignored. In some cases, quite sophisticated material was devalued in this way.

The confidence to select and respond appropriately to an unseen statement is of value in the text-based standards. Many of the most perceptive responses took an approach that centred on the chosen statement and developed a layered response through the act of writing. In these cases, candidates accepted the

relatively open-ended invitation provided by their chosen statement to explore and explain their own responses.

Many successful candidates employed aspects of essay structure throughout their response. Introductions and conclusions when supported by a signposted paragraph structure offer a frame for the steps of an argument. Stronger responses often began by unpacking the statement as a whole or by attending to specific key words of significance to the argument prior to embarking on the discussion of the text. Such an approach can support sophisticated discussion that moves beyond a face-value appreciation of the statement.

The length of responses varied greatly but not in direct proportion to quality. In particular, many web-based responses were long because of injudicious inclusion of multiple pieces of evidence that did not advance the argument. It is depth of thought rather than the number of words or amount of evidence that is required for the text-based standards with merit or excellence.

Responses offered to unfamiliar texts suggested that the poem and prose selection were accessible to candidates. In both cases, more than literal readings underpinned better responses. The comparative nature of Question Three requires candidates to articulate their understandings of two texts together. This was not always done well.

Candidates must ensure they write in the appropriate answer booklet. As the examination questions differ in each standard, NZQA will not transfer candidate responses from the written standard to the visual or oral standard, or vice versa.

Part B: Report on standards

91472: Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- provided a response that addressed their chosen statement implicitly rather than explicitly

- relied on learned details which were not always relevant at the expense of a personal voice

- stated an argument without unpacking or explaining this

- provided a reading of the text that paid little attention to context.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- paid only slight attention to the significance of their chosen statement

- recounted elements of plot without offering interpretation or response

- misunderstood or avoided engaging with keywords in their chosen statement

- rewrote statements in order to accommodate a prepared answer

- chose a topic that did not match their knowledge of the text.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- provided evidence of a comprehensive understanding of their texts

- offered detailed and well-argued explanations of their position on the statement

- discussed the implications of the ideas included in their response

- portrayed relevant personal links to the topic.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- selected a statement that related well to their knowledge of the text

- provided a succinct but focused response to their chosen statement

- made insightful use of evidence from their texts in support of their argument

- included personal and / or real-world examples that were relevant

- used the topic constructively to explore complex themes.

Standard-specific comments

Complex texts such as *The Great Gatsby*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Othello* and *The Road* worked well for this standard. Some short stories and poetry, such as those by Duffy, Baxter and Plath, also produced successful responses, particularly where candidates were able to relate to the themes and situations in the texts.

Texts that were relatively simplistic made it difficult for candidates to produce sophisticated responses.

Some material introduced to responses to this standard had potential but was insufficiently linked to the statement chosen. Critical readings and comparisons between texts are only helpful if they are woven into an argument constructed in response to a statement.

91473: Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- provided evidence that they knew the text but struggled to fully address the statement

- constructed a fairly simple argument but did not always focus on this

- provided a good deal of plot information / technical information sometimes linking it to the statement

- only addressed the chosen statement at the end of each paragraph.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- paid insufficient attention to the chosen statement

- offered a prepared account of slight or no relevance to the chosen statement

- provided a great deal of plot-based evidence with no or very little interpretation

- gave evidence that did not support the idea under discussion.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- focused on a clear line of argument throughout the response within their essay

- made confident and often multiple links between evidence supplied and the chosen statement

- provided a range of appropriate evidence without exercising judicious selection

- unpacked deliberately the chosen statement to some degree.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

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- developed a clear approach or angle in the way they addressed their chosen statement

- wove in seamlessly appropriate and judiciously selected evidence

- incorporated relevant knowledge beyond the text

- structured their response to build on their argument throughout

- discussed thoughtfully the producer's purpose of the text

- unpacked the chosen statement with sophistication.

Standard specific comments

Complex texts that were often the subject of quality responses included *Apocalypse Now*, *Pan's Labyrinth*, *Psycho*, *Ex Machina*, *Blade Runner*, *Atonement*, *The Lives of Others*, *Get Out* and *Jojo Rabbit*.

Limited responses were seen based on more simplistic films, documentaries, and many music videos.

Many responses included considerable discussion of multiple techniques. This approach was most suitable for questions that asked for technical information. At times technical information was insecurely linked to the candidate's chosen statement.

91474: Respond critically to significant aspects of unfamiliar written texts through close reading, supported by evidence

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- attempted to unpack language features

- identified aspects of texts accurately and exemplified the identified aspect

- began to give a critical answer to the question, supported with detail and exemplification

- gave a relevant but sometimes unbalanced explanation to address the question

- displayed understanding through summary and attempted to related this to the questions

- incorporated the keywords about the idea into their answers

- focused on sections of the text rather than the text as a whole.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- addressed the questions without identifying aspects and providing a critical response

- provided limited or no examples to support responses

- showed a limited understanding of the texts or of how they related to the questions

- did not identify two aspects with supporting details

- focused on real world / personal experiences not a critical analysis of the text and language features.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- identified two or more aspects of the text that were relevant to the question

- provided a valid and convincing discussion of aspects with at least one example and a relevant comment for each aspect

- displayed confidence in analysing how techniques were used to create impact

- answered the question specifically and provided a range of supporting evidence

- showed a convincing understanding of the authorial purpose

- wove several relevant quotations into their answer(s)

- explained the development of ideas within the texts

- made direct and frequent links to the demands of the question

- offered convincing links to human nature and the wider world.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- identified at least two aspects of the text in their answer and commented perceptively on these

- embedded relevant and concise examples in a holistic discussion

- wove attention to the question(s) into their answer to create a coherent and cohesive whole

- discussed perceptively how techniques were combined for effect

- used sophisticated vocabulary and expression

- established and sustained an argument

- consistently made links between ideas and overtly discussed purpose

- explored different viewpoints and insights to perceptively demonstrate understanding of purpose

- structured their responses effectively, making links within and between paragraphs.

Standard specific comments

A managed and organised approach to the paper would ensure candidates covered all questions in a balanced way. Evidence should be included as a key aspect each answer. Question 3 requires comparison, a skill not always displayed, but which can be cultivated.

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